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**"Ohio's manufacturers face so many challenges today,"** said Congressman Wilson. **"It is so important that we provide them with the support they need to stay strong and competitive. This bill helps do just that. In the process, it also helps protect good-paying Ohio jobs."**

The House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 1868 in a bipartisan 385-23 vote. H.R. 1868 will provide \$2.5 billion for the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) for fiscal years 2008-2010. That money will increase funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), one of the most successful federal/state partnerships in government. MEP assists small manufacturers and helps boost productivity, sales, investments in modernization and employment.

MEP stats:

— MEP clients achieve productivity gains that are more than four times greater than comparable businesses that do not receive MEP assistance.

— In fiscal year 2005, MEP clients reported 53,219 new or retained workers, sales of \$6.25 billion, cost savings of \$1.3 billion, and plant and equipment investments of \$2.25 billion.